

49. *EUDYPTES PACHYRHYNCHUS*, Gray.

One living specimen.

50. *EUDYPTILA MINOR* (Forst.).

Several specimens.

Mr. Travers finds from careful inquiry that there is no evidence of the following birds ever having inhabited the Chatham Islands, although they have been reported to have been seen there (Trans. New-Zealand Institute, i. 178)—*Ardea alba*, *Ocydromus*, sp., *Anas chlorotis*, and *Apteryx*, sp.

XXXI.—*A Revision of the Genus Henicurus.*

By H. J. ELWES, F.Z.S. &c.

(Plate IX.)

THOUGH the genus *Henicurus* does not present any grave difficulties to the ornithologist, yet, as the species composing it have been a good deal confused and from what we know of its geographical distribution it is not likely that any new ones remain to be discovered, I think the following notes may not be unacceptable.

Temminck first proposed the name *Henicurus* (errore *Enicurus*, ἐνικός et οὐπά) for three species of birds from Java and Sumatra—namely, *Turdus leschenaulti* (Vieill.), *H. ruficapillus*, and *H. velatus*—which he figured and described in the Planches Coloriées, vol. iii. livr. 27, 19, & 90. A few years later, when the riches of the Himalayas were first brought to light, four more species were described by Hodgson and Vigors.

Though the exertions of such indefatigable and skilful naturalists as Jerdon, Blyth, Swinhoe, and David have added hundreds of species to the avifauna of Asia, only two distinct *Henicuri* have, in my opinion, been since discovered.

The birds in question form a very well-marked group, of doubtful affinity; for though they are placed by most authors in the family *Motacillidæ*, and resemble the Wagtails greatly in habits and appearance, it is by no means certain that they are rightly so placed.

Blyth, a naturalist whose opinion on any point of classifi-

cation is of great weight, taking *H. ruficapillus* as the most typical species of the genus (on which point, however, I do not agree with him)*, considers the affinities of *Henicurus* to be with the Myiotherinæ, and says, "the relation of this genus to the Wagtails I consider to be one of analogy rather than affinity."

This point will best be settled by a careful anatomical investigation; but as I unfortunately neglected to preserve the bodies of those species which I have personally observed, and am unable to obtain the necessary materials, I must leave it for the present undecided. It will be observed, however, that *Henicurus* does not agree with *Motacilla* in having the tertiaries as long as the secondaries.

The birds of this genus are preeminently characteristic of the densely wooded mountain-streams of South-eastern Asia, and range from Cashmere to the hill-ranges of China and Java, though nowhere found in India south of the Himalaya. Their plumage, with the single exception of *H. ruficapillus*, is entirely black and white; and their habits, so far as we know them, are very similar. They frequent forest-streams and torrents in the lower ranges of mountains, and rarely stray either into the plains or the upper regions of the Himalaya; though Dr. Stoliczka has procured *H. scouleri* at an elevation of 12,000 feet.

Their motions are so active and lively that they form a conspicuous feature in Himalayan scenery, being usually found either singly or in pairs, flitting rapidly from rock to rock by the side of the most rapid torrents. They appear to be very partial to the neighbourhood of a waterfall or rapid. They make a large nest of moss and fibres, which is placed under a rock

* [Blyth (J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 157), placing *H. ruficapillus* first on his list of the members of the genus, by no means commits himself to the opinion that that species must be considered the type of the genus. There can be no doubt that *H. velatus* is the type of *Henicurus*, that being the only species published, with the description of the genus, in the 27th livraison of the 'Planches Coloriées,' issued 26th July 1823 (Cf. Crotch, Ibis, 1868, p. 500). *H. coronatus*, Temm., = *H. leschenaulti*, was published in the 19th livr. 26 June 1824, and *H. ruficapillus* in the 90th livr. 28 July 1832. Gray gives (Gen. B. p. 41, 1855) *H. leschenaulti* as the type of the genus, but is clearly wrong in so doing.—ED.]

close to the water. Their food consists of insects, larvæ, water-beetles, and small shells.

In describing the plumage of the several species of *Henicuri*, there are several points characteristic of the whole genus, which it will be unnecessary to repeat. In all the species the tail is composed of twelve feathers, of which the four middle pairs are black, with white tips, and graduated in length from the central pair, which are the shortest. The two outer pairs are entirely white, and about equal in length to the next pair, though they vary considerably in this respect in different specimens; the base of the secondaries and tertiaries is also white, and forms a conspicuous bar on the wings (except in *H. velatus*) of greater or less breadth according to the extent to which it is concealed by the wing-coverts; the axillary feathers and greater part of the under wing-coverts, with a bar on the base of the primaries beneath, are also white; the white tips of the secondaries disappear with age, and in fully adult birds are almost imperceptible.

Genus *HENICURUS*, Temm.

Bill moderately long, straight and stout; the upper mandible sharply keeled at the base; gonys well marked; nostrils lateral, set in a deep fossa, closed from above by a membrane; gape with a few stiff hairs. Wings moderate, rounded; first primary short; fourth, fifth and sixth the longest and subequal. Tail long, forked, of twelve feathers, the four inner pairs of which are graduated in length from the centre. Legs and feet moderate; middle toe the longest and united to the outer one as far as the first joint; nails strong and curved.

Clavis specierum.

A. Pectore albo.

a. dorso cinereo:

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|---|-------------------------|
| <i>a'. speculo alari tectricibus celato</i> | 1. <i>velatus</i> . |
| <i>b'. speculo alari conspicuo</i> | 2. <i>schistaceus</i> . |

b. dorso nigro:

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|--|-------------------------|
| <i>c'. cauda longiore quam ala</i> | 3. <i>immaculatus</i> . |
| <i>d'. cauda brevior quam ala</i> | 4. <i>scouleri</i> . |

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| <i>c. capite et collo posticis ferrugineis</i> | 5. <i>ruficapillus</i> . |
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*B. Pectore nigro.**d. dorso immaculato :**e'. major* 6. *leschenaulti*.*f'. minor* 7. *frontalis*.*e. dorso albo lunulato* 8. *maculatus*.*f. dorso albo punctato* 9. *guttatus*.1. *HENICURUS VELATUS*.

Enicurus velatus, Temm. Pl. Col. 160; Gray, Gen. Birds, i. p. 204; Bp. Consp. Av. p. 251; Horsf. & Moore, Cat. Birds in Mus. E. I. Comp. i. p. 347.

Hab. Java (*Diard*).

Head, back, and sides of neck dark slaty grey; wings, chin, and spot in front of the eye black; breast, belly, rump, tail-coverts, and a bar across the forehead white; the white bar on the wing is concealed by the coverts. Bill black; irides dark brown; legs and feet fleshy white.

Length about 7 inches; wing 3; tail $3\frac{1}{2}$; bill $\frac{3}{4}$; tarsus 1.

The female has the top of the head tinged with brown; and, according to Temminck, the throat is whitish, and the back a little more ashy than in the male.

This pretty and distinct species is, so far as I am aware, only found in Java, where it has been collected by MM. Diard, Reinwardt, and Duvaucel. It is rare in collections.

2. *HENICURUS SCHISTACEUS*.

Enicurus schistaceus, Hodgs. As. Res. xix. p. 189; Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 83; Gray, Cat. Hodgs. Coll. in B. M. p. 76; Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 157; Cat. Birds in Mus. A. S. Beng. p. 159; Swinhoe, Ibis, 1861, p. 409, 1867, pp. 29, 404; P. Z. S. 1863, p. 276; Jerdon, Birds of India, ii. p. 215.

H. leucoschistus, Swinhoe, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. 1870, vi. p. 154; P. Z. S. 1871, p. 365.

Hab. Nepal (*Hodgson*); Sikim (*Elwes*); Bhotan (*Pemberton*); Tenasserim (*Blyth*); Moupin (*David*); China (*Swinhoe*).

Above dark slaty-grey, with a narrow white band across forehead from eye to eye; lores, cheeks, chin, and primaries black, the latter (except the first two) showing a white mark below the white bar. Throat, breast, belly, rump, and tail-coverts white. Eyes dark brown; beak black; feet and legs

fleshy white. Length $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 inches; tail $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5; wing $3\frac{1}{2}$; tarsus 1; bill, from gape, $\frac{5}{4}$.

This species seems to have the widest range of any of the genus; for unless we recognize the Chinese *H. leucoschistus* as distinct, it is found from Nepal through Szechuen to near Amoy, and southwards as far as the mountain-ranges of Tenasserim.

After having, through Mr. Whitely's permission, carefully examined the specimens of this species in Mr. Swinhoe's collection, I cannot see that there is any good or constant difference between Chinese and Indian specimens of this bird; and Mr. Swinhoe has twice expressed himself to the same effect (Ibis, 1867, p. 404, and P.Z.S. 1863, p. 276), though he has since discovered that the Chinese bird differs in having the bill straighter along the culmen, and the gonys more ascending. This, to my eye, is quite imperceptible; and as in his list of Chinese birds Mr. Swinhoe ignores this point, and mentions as the only difference the variable amount of white on the primaries and under wing, I cannot but think that it would have been better to have waited till he had made his case a little clearer. The specimens collected by the Abbé David at Moupin, on the borders of Thibet and China, are quite similar to the Indian bird.

H. schistaceus is not common in Sikim, and keeps to the lower elevations, so far as I have observed. Its habits are similar to those of its congeners; but nothing is recorded of its nidification. M. de Grijs told Mr. Swinhoe that he saw these birds on the margins of pools in the hills about 130 miles inland from Amoy, and that they frequently uttered twittering notes not unlike those of the Sandpiper, but louder.

3. *HENICURUS IMMACULATUS*.

Enicurus immaculatus, Hodgs. As. Res. xix. p. 190; Gray's Zool. Misc. p. 83, 1844; Cat. Hodgs. Coll. in B.M. p. 76; Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 157; Cat. Birds Mus. As. Soc. B. p. 159; Horsf. & Moore, Cat. Birds in Mus. E. I. Comp. i. p. 346; Godwin-Austen, J. A. S. B. 1870, p. 107; Jerdon, Birds of India ii. p. 213.

Hab. Nepal (*Hodgs.*); Sikim (*Elwes*); Khasia Hills (*Godwin-Austen*); Aracan (*Blyth*); Assam? (*Griffith*) (*errone* Afghanistan).

Head, neck, back, wings, and throat black; breast, belly, rump, sides, tail-coverts, and wing-bar white; a white band on the forehead about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch broad, extending from above the eye across the base of the bill. Beak black; eyes dark brown; legs and feet fleshy white.

Female like the male, but slightly duller-coloured on the head. Young birds are of a duller black, and have no white on the forehead.

Length $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches; tail $4\frac{1}{4}$ to $4\frac{3}{4}$; wing $3\frac{1}{2}$; tarsus 1; bill from gape $\frac{3}{4}$.

This species, which, in the Himalayas, is the rarest of all the genus, appears to be commoner in the hill-ranges of Burmah and Aracan. I shot one pair on April 4th, 1870, by the side of a narrow jungle-torrent, at a place called Sivoke, where the Teesta river debouches from the Sikim mountains into the plains. They were apparently breeding, and exactly resembled *H. guttatus* in flight and habits.

Of this pair the male has hardly any white tips to the secondaries, whilst in the female they are quite conspicuous. This seems to be a most variable character in other species of the genus.

This bird much resembles *H. schistaceus*; but adult specimens may be distinguished by the broader white band on the forehead, as well as the colour of the back, and immature ones by the absence of the conspicuous white mark on the primaries, which in *H. schistaceus* extends beyond the primary wing-coverts.

4. *HENICURUS SCOULERI*.

Enicurus scouleri, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1830-31, p. 174: Gould, Cent. Him. Birds, pl. 28; Birds of Asia, pt. xviii.; Jameson, Calc. Journ. Nat. Hist. vii. p. 363; Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 157; Cat. Birds in Mus. As. Soc. Cal. p. 159; Beavan, Ibis, 1868, p. 75; Horsf. & Moore, Cat. Birds in Mus. E. I. Comp. i. p. 347; Gray, Cat. Hodgs. Coll. in B. Mus. p. 76; Adams, P. Z. S. 1858, p. 489, 1859, p. 179; Jerdon, Birds of India, ii. p. 214.

Henicurus scouleri, Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1871, p. 365; Stoliczka, J. A. S. B. 1868, p. 47.

Enicurus nigrifrons, Hodgs. MSS., Gray, P. Z. S. 1859, p. 102; Jerdon, Birds of India, ii. p. 215; Godwin-Austen, J. A. S. B. 1870, p. 107 (?)

E. heterurus, Hodgs.

E. scouleri vel *heterurus*, Hodgs. Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 83.

Hab. Cashmere (*Adams*); Chergaon, 11,000 ft., et Kotegurh, 6000 ft. (*Stoliczka*); Simla (*Beavan*); Nepal (*Hodgson*); Sikim (*Elwes*); Khasia Hills (*Godwin-Austen*); Moupin (*David*); Bhotan (*Pemberton*).

Back, neck, and head, except a white frontal patch, black; breast, belly, rump, tail-coverts, and broad bar on wings white; tail short, the centre feathers black except at the base, gradually showing more white to the outer pair, which are wholly white; the tail-feathers nearly equal in length.

The young (described by mistake as another species) is of a duller black, without any white on the forehead, and has the breast mottled with black and white. Bill black; eyes dark brown; legs fleshy white (not black, as stated in the 'Birds of India' by mistake). Length $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, wing 3, tail 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$, tarsus $\frac{7}{8}$, bill $\frac{1}{2}$.

This little *Henicurus*, which differs from all the rest in the comparative proportions of its tail, legs, and bill, is found from Cashmere to East Thibet, but seems to be commonest in the Eastern Himalayas. .

Dr. Stoliczka found it in the valley of the Sutlej, more confined to the hills of the outer ranges, but not uncommonly found up to 8000 feet; while Adams says that in Cashmere it prefers the streams of the higher ranges. I found it common in Sikim; and it is the only species which I observed in the valleys of the interior, where it frequents rivers in preference to the smaller streams. As Jerdon has related, it often contends with *Ruticilla fuliginosa* for a favourite rock in the midst of a boiling torrent, where, cleverly avoiding the waves, it searches among the great boulders that are rolled down from the mountains for the larvæ of various water-insects, which form its chief food. The highest point where I observed it was on the Lachoong river, one of the great branches of the Teesta, 10,000 feet above the

sea. The nest and eggs are said to be similar to those of *H. maculatus*, but smaller.

5. *HENICURUS RUFICAPILLUS*.

E. ruficapillus, Temm. Pl. Col. 534; Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 155; Cat. Birds in Mus. As. Soc. p. 159.

E. diadematus, Müll. (ex Boie, MS.) Tijds. voor Nat. Gesch. 1835, p. 346.

Hab. Java (*Blyth*); Sumatra (*Müller*); Malacca (*Maingay*).

Head, cheeks, sides of neck, and back rich reddish brown; belly, rump, gorget, and narrow wing-bar white; breast-feathers white, broadly edged with black; chin and throat black, a narrow-band on the forehead white, bordered with black.

In some specimens, which, according to Temminck, are males, the chin and throat are white and the lower part of the back black instead of red. As, however, none of the specimens which I have examined had their sexes noted, I am unable to verify this statement. According to Müller the female is smaller than the male, and has the back of a darker rufous. Length $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; wing $3\frac{1}{2}$; outer tail-feathers 3; tarsus $1\frac{1}{8}$; beak $\frac{7}{8}$. Irides brown; beak black; legs, feet, and claws fleshy white.

Blyth says (J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 155):—"This fine species, preeminently typical of its group, strongly exhibits, in the form of its bill and the rufous colouring of its head and nape, the Myiotherine affinity of the genus; the bill has the upper mandible hooked over at the top much as in *Cinclus*, minus the hook and nareal orifices; and it is the same form of bill as reappears in *Eupetes*. It is a very interesting species, as indicating more than any other the affinity of the group."

I should be inclined to think that this species is more aberrant than any from the type of the genus; and were it not connected with the rest through *H. frontalis*, which it resembles greatly in its proportions, I should be disposed to place it as the type of a subgenus.

Temminck says of this bird (Rec. d'Oiseaux, 90th livraison) that it was first received from Pallambang, Sumatra, and is found very rarely in Java. "It is difficult to approach this very shy

bird, which frequents the borders of torrents in the most inaccessible ravines of the wooded mountains."

Müller says, "I have only met with it hitherto near some of the small rivulets of the shore-mountains at the base of Boengoes (Sumatra). It is there found jumping on dry-lying rolling stones, screaming vociferously, just as Boie mentions is the habit of *H. coronatus* and *velatus*."

6. *HENICURUS LESCHENAULTI*.

Turdus leschenaulti, Vieill. N. Dict. Hist. Nat. xx. p. 269 (1818); Gal. des Oiseaux, pl. 145.

Enicurus coronatus, Temm. Pl. Col. 113.

Motacilla speciosa, Horsf. Linn. Trans. xiii. p. 155; Zool. Res. in Java, 1824; Lath. Gen. Hist. vi. p. 319.

Enicurus leschenaulti, Gray, Gen. Birds, i., p. 204; Horsf. & Moore, Cat. Birds in Mus. E. I. Comp. vol. i. p. 345; Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1863, p. 276.

Henicurus speciosus, Swinhoe, Ibis, 1861, p. 265; et 1862, pp. 261, 264.

Henicurus sinensis, Gould, P. Z. S. 1865, p. 665; Swinhoe, Ibis, 1867, p. 404, and P. Z. S. 1871, p. 365.

H. chinensis, Gould, Birds of Asia, pt. xviii.

Hab. Java (*Horsfield*); Moupin (*David*); China, Fokien prov. (*Swinhoe*).

Crown, rump, belly, tail-coverts and wing-bar white, the rest black; the white feathers of the head more or less elongated, but not forming a crest.

Length 10 inches; wing $4\frac{1}{4}$; tail $5\frac{3}{4}$; beak from gape 1; tarsus $1\frac{1}{4}$.

Mr. Gould has described specimens of this bird from China as *H. sinensis*; but after comparing a number of specimens from Java and China, I am unable to see that the character upon which Mr. Gould relies (namely the smaller frontal patch) is sufficient to rank the Chinese bird as a good species; and Mr. Swinhoe, though he admitted the distinctness of the species in his list of Chinese birds (P. Z. S. 1871, p. 365), wrote as follows in 'The Ibis' (1867, p. 404):—

"I see that Mr. Gould has made a new species of the Chinese



pied *Henicurus*; the chief peculiarity of his *H. sinensis* being the less extent of white on the forehead.

"I have three specimens from Foochow varying a good deal in the expansion of this white. I carefully compared my skins with those in the E. I. Museum of true *H. speciosus* (Horsf.), and, though anxious to find a difference, could discover none. I suspect that the greater or less extent of frontal white is a sexual difference." In P. Z. S. 1863, p. 276, Mr. Swinhoe says of this bird:—"Never procured by me in China, except on the hills round Foochow, where I have procured it both in winter and summer. My specimens from that locality correspond entirely with Javan skins."

Horsfield says of *H. leschenaulti*, in his Zoological Researches in Java, "It is very locally distributed, and uniformly deserts the neighbourhood of populous villages. It is almost entirely confined to the southern coast of Java, which abounds in small streams descending rapidly from the hills and shaded by luxuriant shrubs. Here I first discovered this bird in the year 1809. I afterwards met with it again in the district of Karang-bollong, and in the provinces south of Kediri. In more central situations, it frequents the banks of an elevated lake near the declivities of the mountain Prahū, where I found it more numerous than in any other part of Java."

7. *HENICURUS FRONTALIS*. (Plate IX.)

E. frontalis, Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 156; Cat. Birds in Mus. A. S. p. 159; Horsf. & Moore, Cat. Birds in Mus. E. I. Comp. i. p. 346; Bp. Consp. Av. p. 251.

Hab. Malacca (*Cantor, Maingay, Linstedt*).

Plumage like that of *H. leschenaulti*. Breast black; belly, bar on wings, crown, and forehead white, the feathers of the head elongated like those of *H. leschenaulti*. Length about 8 inches, wing $3\frac{3}{8}$, tarsus $1\frac{1}{8}$, tail $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4, bill from gape $\frac{1}{6}$, culmen $\frac{1}{6}$.

This species, which in its size and proportions strongly resembles *H. ruficapillus*, is in plumage similar to *H. leschenaulti*. It appears to be rare, and has only been found, so far as I am aware, in the Malay peninsula. The Plate is taken from a Malacca specimen kindly lent to me by Mr. Wallace.

8. *HENICURUS MACULATUS*.

Enicurus maculatus, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1830-31, p. 9; Gould, Cent. Him. Birds, pl. 27, et Birds of Asia, pt. xviii.; Cat. Hodgs. Coll. in B. M. p. 76; Jameson, Calc. Journ. Nat. Hist. vii. p. 363; Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 156; Cat. Birds in Mus. As. Soc. p. 159; Ibis, 1867, p. 29; Horsf. & Moore, Cat. Birds in Mus. E. I. Comp. i. p. 346; Adams, P. Z. S. 1858, p. 489, & 1859, p. 179; Jerd. Birds of India, ii. p. 212; Beavan, Ibis, 1868, p. 75; Brooks, Ibis, 1869, p. 57; Stoliczka, J. A. S. B. 1868, p. 47.

Enicurus fuliginosus, Hodgs. As. Res. xix. p. 190.

Hab. Cashmere (*Adams*); Pangi, 9000-10,000 feet (*Stoliczka*); Kangra (*Elwes*); Kumaon (*Brooks*); Simla (*Beavan*); Nepal (*Hodgson*).

Head, breast, wings, and back black. The feathers of the back are each tipped with a white mark or lunule, which run together on the neck, and form a mottled collar of black and white; round patch on forehead, belly, rump, flanks, and tail-coverts white; wing-bar conspicuous; bill black; feet and legs fleshy white; irides dark brown. Length 10 to $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches; wing 4; tail $5\frac{3}{4}$; bill, from gape, $\frac{7}{8}$; tarsus $1\frac{1}{8}$. The immature bird is of a dull black, without white forehead or spots. The female has the top of the head tinged with brown.

The Spotted Fork-tail is one of the most characteristic Himalayan birds, and, being common in the neighbourhood of the hill-stations at an elevation of 6000 or 7000 feet, is known to most Anglo-Indians. Its habits have been well described by Adams and also by Jerdon, to whose invaluable work I refer those who wish to know more of them. It has been found, by Dr. Stoliczka, in the Sutlej valley, at elevations of from 5000 to 11,000 feet; but it does not extend, in that locality, eastward of the large forests into the Thibetan climate. Adams says (P. Z. S. 1859, p. 179) that it is common on the mountain-streams southwards of the valley of Cashmere. Its nest was taken by the late Mr. Horne, near Nynsee Tal, on the 27th of May. It was placed in the side of a rocky watercourse; and the eggs, which were three or four in number, were 1 inch by $\cdot 625$, white, with a faint shade of green, and speckled rather sparingly with rusty brown.

9. *HENICURUS GUTTATUS*.

Enicurus guttatus, Gould, P. Z. S. 1865, p. 664, et Birds of Asia, pt. xviii.; Blyth, Ibis, 1867, p. 29.

H. maculatus, Godwin-Austen, J. A. S. B. 1870, p. 109; Jerdon, Birds of India, ii. p. 212; Beavan, Ibis, 1868, p. 75 (in part).

Hab. Nepal (*Hodgson*); Sikim (*Elwes*); Khasia (*Godwin-Austen*); Aracan? (*Blyth*); Burmah (*Jerdon*).

Head, breast, and back black; the latter marked with round or oblong white spots, from the size of a No. 4 shot on the lower back to that of a pea on the neck, where they are closer together, and form a collar, less conspicuous than in *H. maculatus*; a circular patch on forehead, belly, flanks, tail-coverts, and wing-bar white.

Female the same, with a tinge of brown on the back of the head. Irides dark brown; legs and feet fleshy white; bill black.

The young is of a dull brownish-black, and has no white on the forehead or back.

Length $9\frac{1}{2}$ to $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches; tail 5 to 6; bill, from gape, $\frac{7}{8}$; tarsus $1\frac{1}{8}$; wing 4.

This species was not distinguished from *H. maculatus* until 1865, when it was separated by Mr. Gould under the appropriate name of *H. guttatus*. Though several other distinctive marks are given by which it is said to differ from its western representative, such as its smaller size, narrower tail-feathers, and smaller patch on the forehead, I am unable, after comparing a large series, to find any constant difference except in the shape and arrangement of the white spots on the back; and I believe that when a large series is procured from different parts of Nepal, it will be found impossible to define the limits of the two forms. Mr. Hodgson procured both in the central Himalayas; but as his collectors travelled over the whole of Nepal, which extends about 500 miles from east to west, and no localities are given with any of his specimens in the British Museum which I have examined, it is at present impossible to say how far to the north-west *H. guttatus* ranges, and whether it interbreeds with *H. maculatus* or not. Mr. Hodgson himself never distinguished the two species; and he was by no means

backward in separating supposed species when any appreciable difference could be discovered between two birds.

As, however, I have been able, without looking at the labels, to separate a considerable number of specimens of these representative forms when mixed together, I feel hardly justified in refusing specific rank to *H. guttatus*. I have observed it in Sikim at elevations of from 3000 to 7000 feet in the outer ranges of hills only, and found it paired on the 17th of May, when, from the appearance of the sexual organs, breeding must have commenced. Dr. Jerdon's account of the habits of *H. maculatus* applies equally well to this species.

XXXII.—*On the Genus Colius, its Structure and Systematic Place.* By Dr. JAMES MURIE, F.L.S. &c.

(Plate X.)

p. 229. 1

By whatever motive we are impelled to study ornithology in its classific aspect, when first the characters of two species are pointed out to us, they appear clear and readily discernible. Proceeding to genera, they too dwell in our mind's eye as axioms, and so on to larger groups.

But soon the time comes when we acknowledge distinctions which are not so obvious. Instead of that sharp definition which we had believed was the attribute of birds in their relations to each other, we are compelled to admit that there is often an interweaving of form, difficult to disentangle and hard to express in words.

The subject of this paper is representative of a group of birds (the Colies) requiring nicety of reasoning to appreciate the value of its characters and their degree of relation ship to those of other forms.

I. POSITION ASSIGNED BY VARIOUS WRITERS TO THE COLIES.

The birds in question are by no means showy, so far as their dress is concerned. The familiar name of "Mousebirds," which the Dutch colonists of the Cape and others have bestowed on